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Avon Past

Avon Past

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EDITORIAL

On your marks . . . . . get set . . . . .

' "What is a Caucus-race?" said Alice; not that she much wanted to know, but the Dodo had paused as if it thought that **somebody** ought to speak, and no-one else seemed inclined to say anything.

' "Why," said the Dodo, "the best way to explain it is to do it." (And as you might like to try the thing yourself some winter day . . . . . .)'

Some readers may have felt great sympathy for Alice in Wonderland and that their involvement in archaeology or local history was much like being dragooned by the Dodo into a Caucus-race. Let's hope the rewards were more than liquorice comfits! The launching of the new journal has also been a Caucus-race, something which has to be done to find out what it is about but for which the prizes and the winners remain doubtful.

We are pleased that the articles for this first issue of **Avon Past** are concerned with such different subjects. At least two of the articles could equally well have appeared in journals restricted to either archaeology or local history. Perhaps this is a measure of the ease with which the Archaeological Council and the Local History Association will be able to work together and we can hope that the joint journal will only mark the start of a series of co-operative ventures.

Sue Barrance
Georgina Plowright

COVER ILLUSTRATION

The medieval stone roof boss with fragments of ribbing attached, from which the cover illustration has been drawn, was one of three found during the construction of the Keynsham By-pass. Possibly the bosses come from the roof of the refectory of Keynsham Abbey and, as they were found face downwards on the site, they are in a good state of preservation. The iconography shows Sampson slaying the lion with his bare hands (Judges ch. 14, v.5). The carving and treatment of the subject are fine and the boss is probably one of the best representations of this scene. Two other local examples are to be found in the nave of Exeter Cathedral and in the ruins of Hailes Abbey, Gloucestershire.

Keynsham Abbey was one of six Victorine foundations within the order of St. Augustine, and was founded by William, Earl of Gloucester some time between 1160 and 1171. It was dissolved in 1539. Other Victorine establishments were Staverdale, St. Augustines Bristol, Worspring (Woodspring), and Warmsley and Wigmore, both in Herefordshire.

We are grateful to Mr E. Mason and the Folk House Archaeological Club, for permission to use a drawing of the roof boss as our symbol, and for the information in this note. The boss is at present on display in Fry's gatehouse museum at Keynsham.

COVER DESIGN: Tim Barrance.

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MEDIEVAL DEER PARKS IN AVON

Susan Lay and Rob Iles

Deer parks were a common feature in the medieval country-side; there were probably more than forty in Avon alone. They are similar to post-medieval landscape parks in only one major respect: they were large areas of open land separated from their surroundings by a large barrier. The latter was usually a bank and wooden fence but could be a wall or stout fence; frequently there was also a ditch, and where it has survived it is usually to be found on the inside of the bank. The main purpose of medieval parks was to supply venison, particularly in winter when meat was scarce, and for the sport of hunting, although some parks were probably too small for that pursuit. Thus deer parks were primarily a lordly status symbol but they were also put to economic use, at least in part, for their pasture and timber.

Most large landowners, including bishops and abbots, had a deer park on their main estates and even lesser nobility might have a small one. All deer in medieval England belonged to the crown and it is thought that it was necessary to obtain a licence to create a park; however licences are fairly rare Documentary references to parks are not uncommon but are fragmented in a variety of sources. One of the commonest references to parks results from the activities of local poachers. Unfortunately no systematic historical research has been carried out in the area of Avon as in other counties, and our studies are primarily concerned with fieldwork in an attempt to ascertain the impact of parks on the landscape.

Most fieldwork on medieval parks has been concentrated on locating their boundaries (e.g. Cantor and Wilson, 1961 onwards) but the special circumstances of their use provide a wide variety of resource material to both the landscape historian and the natural historian. They are likely to preserve pre-medieval and early medieval features, notably where the deer park later became the setting for a large country house. The size and restrictive nature of deer parks was likely to have had a considerable effect on the medieval settlement and communications in their immediate locality. As they were in demesne land, other buildings and items under manorial control were often placed in deer parks, including a lodge to be used while hunting, fishponds, warrens and mills. In addition the old woodland and parkland trees contained in medieval parks have often conserved ancient plant communities and lichens of considerable interest to botanists.

So far as we are aware, only two parks in Avon have previously been published in any detail: the first was contained in a study of Hill parish in the far north of the county (Jenner-Fust, 1931); the second, Ubley park, was briefly mentioned in a lucid exposition of the medieval landscape of the Mendips (Neale, 1976). The distribution of medieval deer parks in this area has already been discussed elsewhere (Iles, 1978); recent research has uncovered more parks than were known at that time and a revised list is being prepared. The following parks are all in the northern half of Avon (formerly Gloucestershire), one (Tormarton) in the Cotswolds, the others in the Vale.

Tortworth Park (ST 7093)

Tortworth park lies more or less in the centre of Tortworth parish, and covered about 300 acres. The rolling landscape of the area reflects the varied geology including clay, Keuper marl and dolomitic conglomerate and is mainly between 150 feet and 250 feet above sea level. No specific references have yet been found to the medieval park in Tortworth, but a William Spencer is described as 'parker of Tortworth' in 1362 where

he was found not guilty of ravishing a woman (Cal. PR, 1361 – 74, 274). Some years later it is recorded that 'William Parker alias Spencer of Tortworth' had been murdered (Cal. PR, 1377 – 81, 545). Atkyns (1712) notes that Sir William Ducie obtained a licence in 1661 from the crown to enclose Tortworth park, which according to Rudder (1779) had a high stone wall.

However it is fairly certain that the 1661 park, which is depicted on Kip's drawing (Atkyns, 1712) occupies only the eastern half of the medieval park. To complicate matters further the 2nd Earl of Ducie created an entirely new park around Tortworth Court built 1849 – 52, in the south-west corner of the parish. The medieval park is shown on the county maps of Saxton (1577) and Speed (1610) embracing the village of Tortworth in a bend of the Little Avon river. The names Old Park and Coney Ground occur in the west and south-west sides of the park on the 1842 Tithe Map (BRO); other field names on the Tithe Map in the southern sector of the medieval park probably derive from the 1661 ornamental park (fig. 1).

The boundary of the medieval deer park is fairly certain, apart from the east side. There is little trace of it on the north-east side except to the west of Avening Green where there is a slight bank. From Little Tortworth Copse southwards to Tortworth Common is a boundary wall in an area where most fields are enclosed by hedges. This wall is probably the east boundary of the 1661 park and may be also of the medieval park; the wall does in fact lie on a broad bank in the south-east corner. On the south side of Coney Ground there are traces of a broad bank up to 1.5m. high. Along the whole of the western side and just outside the park bounds is a disused sunken trackway. On the inside of the track are sections of quite a large bank, especially on the edge of Daniel's Wood. It is considered that the road leading northwards to Damery bridge over the Little Avon was altered from the present course, past the church, to this old trackway on the outside of the park. It was again altered back to its original course past Tortworth church in the nineteenth century. In other instances, where roads are diverted to make a park, a royal licence was obtained to divert the road but no reference has yet been found of this at Tortworth.

Other features of note include pillow mounds, a probable moat and the Tortworth Chestnut. There are at least four pillow mounds on the east side of the Coney Ground; they are shown on the plan of Tortworth park (fig. 1) sketched from an air photograph (R.A.F. CPE/UK/2110 3115 5/1947). They are now only about 0.5m. high with flat tops and traces of a ditch. It is impossible to date these pillow mounds or even to be certain of their origin but as early as 1304 Nicholas de Kyngeston was granted free warren on his demesne lands in Tortworth (Cal. Ch. R, 3, 44).

The Old Court was abandoned in the mid-19th century when the new Tortworth Court was built. The site of the Old Court is marked on the OS six inch map as having 'remains' to the north of the church but there is nothing to see now (1978) apart from an L-shaped pond on its north and east sides, which was probably part of a moat. Kip's engraving (Atkyns 1712) shows this pond as being separate from the ornamental ponds in the garden layout. The terraces visible to the east of the churchyard are 17th-century garden remains. The area around the church and manor may conceal the medieval village of Tortworth, if it ever had a nucleated settlement. There are comparatively few buildings in the parish today, and most of those are scattered and built as estate farms and cottages in the late 19th century.

To the south of the church is the celebrated Tortworth Chestnut, a very ancient

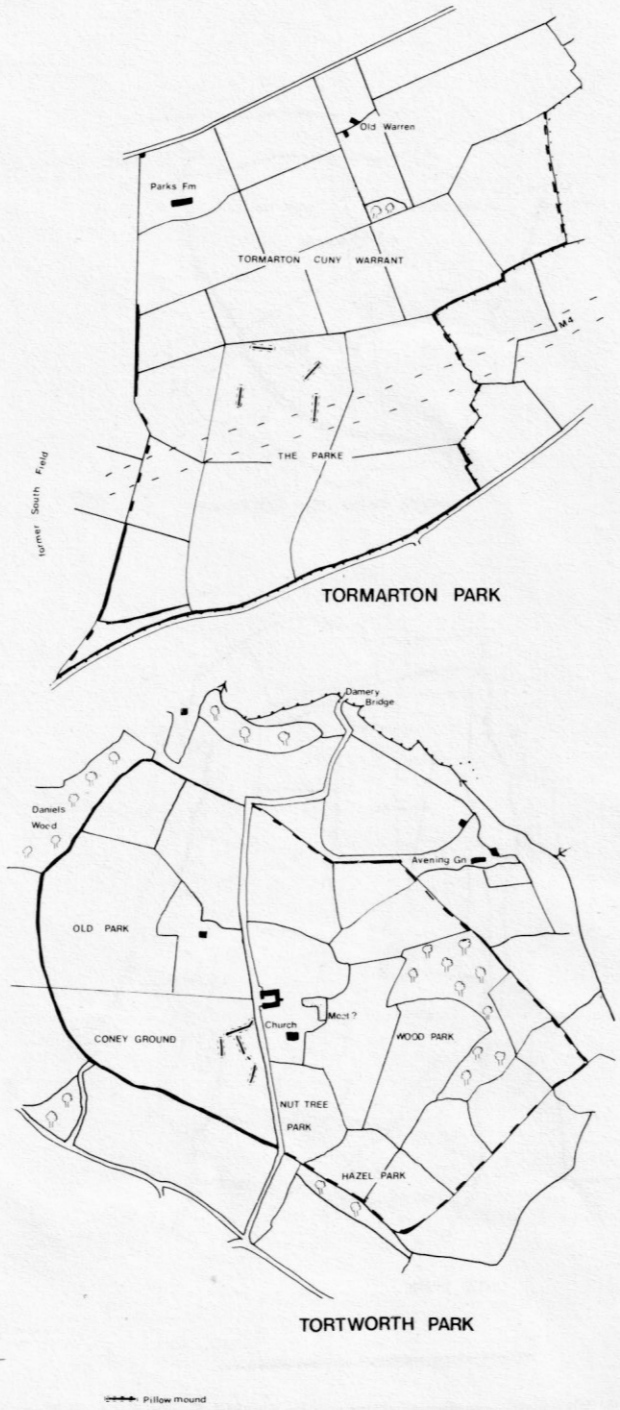
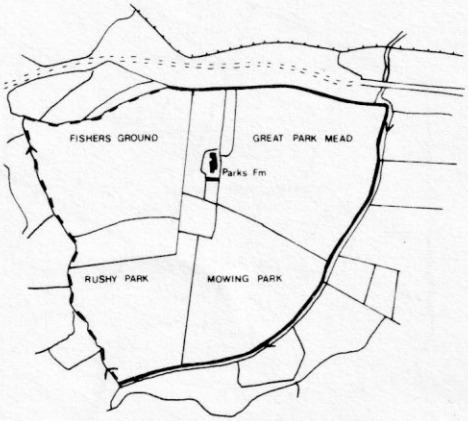
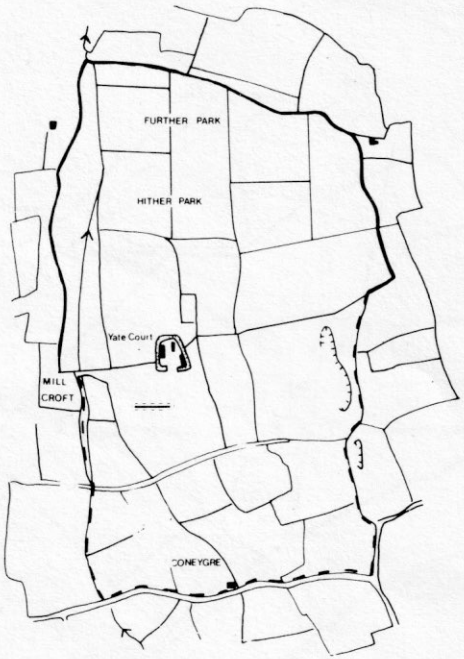


Fig. 1. Plans of medieval deer parks at Tormarton and Tortworth.



KINGS PARK, OLD SODBURY



YATE PARK

Fig. 2. Plans of medieval deer parks at Old Sodbury and Yate.

Spanish Chestnut. It is not possible to tell how old it is and it is now hollow but has live offshoots at the base. There are also a fair number of old oak trees scattered about the western half of the park, especially in Coney Ground.

Yate Park (ST 7186)

Yate park, covering about 350 acres, lies in the northern part of the parish well outside the newly built-up town. Most of the park is fairly flat pasture land about 200 feet above sea level, with a mixed geology including coal measures, Keuper marl and sandstone. On the east side of the park is a north-south ridge of carboniferous limestone, about 100 feet higher. In the park is Yate Court, for which John de Wyllington obtained a licence to crenellate (Cal. PR) in 1299; he may also have created the park at that time. The first reference to the park is in 1302 when a commission was set up to inquire about 'persons who by night entered the park of John de Wylington of Yate by Sodbury, hunted therein and carried away deer' (Cal. PR). There is a much later reference to poaching in Yate park in 1539 in Gardiner (1885, 413) quoted by Moore (1976, 39). The latest reference to Yate park is 1557 (Cal. PR).

There exists a detailed survey of Yate Court in 1548 – 9, printed in full in the **Trans. Bristol and Gloucester Archaeol. Soc.** 21 (1898, 22-4). It was drawn up for the Berkeley family who lived at Yate while in exile from Berkeley castle from 1491 to 1553 (Kennedy-Skipton, 1898). This survey not only lists the moat, with its gate-house, hall and domestic range, but also briefly describes the park. At that time it was said to 'contain 2½ miles' (? circumference) and was 1½ miles from Yate. It was enclosed 'parte with walle and parte with pale'. In addition to the moat with its buildings there were several other manorial features in the park including a corn mill and mill pond, a dove house and a 'small warreyne of conyes'. Also 'ther is severed with a pale in the park 32 acres of mede and pasture'; another meadow of 16 acres is described as 'late parcell of the parke'. Both areas of meadow lie on the west side of the park, as did the mill according to field names there (Tithe Map, GRO). Hunting, or at least deer keeping, was still carried on in 1548 as 40 deer are mentioned.

The location of the park is fairly certain from the 1548 survey; in addition there are park field names (fig. 2) on the Tithe Map (GRO). The park bounds in the northern half are obvious and still known by that name locally, but the southern boundary is less certain. From the north-west corner in a clockwise direction to the middle of the east side is a large, thick stone wall, up to 1.5m. high in parts although tumbled in others. In places the wall is on a slight bank with an internal ditch; at ST 719863 the wall lies on a bank 2m. high, with a ditch 5m. wide inside and a smaller bank inside that. Further south on the east side the area has been heavily quarried and no trace of the boundary remains. The ground has also been disturbed on the west side by Celestine mining, although stretches of a double hedge to the north-west of Yate Court probably mark the boundary. The south side of the park is least certain but it may follow a minor road, the hedge to the east of Tanhouse Farm lies on a bank.

The moat around Yate Court still remains and the west side is still water-filled, although parts have been infilled. The Court house is still lived in and many of the new farm buildings incorporate sections of old wall. The large gate-house, marked on the OS six inch map, was moved to Berkeley Castle over 50 years ago (Finberg, 1955). Surrounding the moat are an amorphous group of earthworks, some of which may have resulted from Celestine mining.

To the north-east of the moat is a large old pond, now used as a withy bed, which

was probably once a fishpond, although no ponds were listed in the 1548 survey. South of the moat is a long east-west mound up to 1m. high and roughly conforming to the shape of a pillow mound; it seems unlikely that this was constructed to be used as a rabbit warren because the mound is very stony. The field north-west of Tanhouse Farm is called Coneygre on the Tithe Map. There is a record of a grant of free warren to John de Wylington in 1311 (Cal. Ch. R, 3, 165). The whole area around Yate Court, both buildings and earthworks would repay careful survey, particularly as it could be tied in with the 16th century description.

The tramway in the south part of the park ran from an old quarry to a series of twelve limekilns (at ST 704859) which still survive. Also of note are the 17th-century gabled farmhouses which are dotted around the edge of the former deer park.

Tormarton Park (ST 7979)

Tormarton park lies on the east side of Tormarton parish, covering about 300 acres. The land, mainly limestone, is gently undulating with an average height of 500 feet above sea level. The only medieval reference we have found to the park was in 1336 when several people including the vicar of Dodington broke into John de la Ryvere's 'park at Tormerton entered his free warren therein, hunted in these, carried away deer from the park and hares, rabbits and partridges from the warren and assaulted his men' (Cal. PR). The licence for a free warren in Tormarton was granted in 1254 to Richard de la Rivere (Cal. PR) and confirmed in 1317 to John de Sancto Filbert (Cal. Ch. R).

A map of 1637 (GRO: Platt of Acton Turville adjoining to the lordship of Tormarton, photocopy) marks two large fields on the county boundary, The Parke and an even larger open area to the north, Cuny Warrant (fig. 1). On the OS six inch map there are two farms in this area called Parks Farm and Old Warren. The outline of the park (fig. 1) is reasonable certain apart from the north side. The M4 motorway was laid in a cutting across the southern end of the park a few years ago and this resulted in an alteration of the field boundaries in the area.

There are only slight traces of the boundary on the west side, by the side of Warren Gorse (slight bank) and in the south-west corner (scarp). The south side of the park boundary is particularly impressive; the first part from the west is a double bank with a ditch between, up to 2m. deep and 4m. wide. Further east there is just a single bank or high scarp. The boundary going northwards is marked by a bank topped by a stone wall. There is no trace of the boundary on either side of the motorway on the east side but a little further on where it turns north-eastwards the high field wall lies on top of a bank. It seems most likely that the north side of the park followed the boundaries joining Parks Farm, Old Warren and Warren Barn, which was probably the northern side of the area marked Tormarton Cuny Warrant on the 1637 map.

In a field in the centre of the park, now crossed by the motorway, there were four and possibly more pillow mounds (fig. 1); they have been sketched from an R.A.F. vertical air photograph (106G/UK/1416, 3027) taken in April 1964. These pillow mounds were not in the 1637 warren but in the fields then called The Parke. There is now nothing to see as the remains of the field not taken up by the motorway have been cultivated for the last few years. In addition to the pillow mounds the air photograph shows ring ditches in the same field. A more obvious and recent feature, which is also fast disappearing from the local landscape, is the fox covert. They are field corners planted with trees at the time of enclosure, to satisfy a new generation of

huntsman. According to Rudder (1779) Tormarton was enclosed in about 1760, but as no enclosure map survives it may have only applied to the common fields known as North and South field.

Kings Park, Old Sodbury (ST 7482)

This park on the western side of the former parish of Old Sodbury, lies close to the town of Chipping Sodbury, to the south of Sodbury Common and covers about 150 acres. The land is fairly flat, about 300 – 350 feet above sea level and is mainly lias clay. Although there is a reference to a 'parcus' at Sodbury in Domesday Book, it probably only refers to an enclosure and not necessarily to a deer park. The earliest record we have found of the park is in 1310, due to deer poaching (Cal. PR); at that time it belonged to Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, who was then a minor and it was in the King's hands. It came into the king's control again in 1377 (Cal. PR) and 1405 (Cal. PR) and was for a short while forfeited to the king by Thomas Despenser in 1401 (Cal. Inq. Misc.). In these periods Richard II and Henry IV appointed park keepers, as various kings were to do on at least eleven occasions between 1478 and 1545 (Cal. PR).

When Leland visited Chipping Sodbury in about 1540 he mentioned 'a Parke of the Kyngs by this Towne.' This area continued to be known as the Kings Park in 17th century indentures (GRO). Three indentures of 1605 – 6 specifically refer to closes in the 'King's Park or Old Sodbury Park' which was then tenanted out; presumably the area had been disparked by then. An indenture of 1665 describes the land called 'the park by Chipping Sodbury containing by estimation 140 acres.' Ten years later 'that farm and closes of meadow or pasture . . . known as the Kings Park or Old Sodburyes Park' was sold including 'a farmehouse or Lodge barn and other buildings' (GRO). Field names (fig. 2) on the Tithe Award of 1839 (GRO) include several with park elements around Park's Farm and one is known as Fisher's Ground (?Great Fishweares in 1605 indenture).

The projected boundary encloses an area of pasture of roughly triangular shape bounded on the north by common land, on the south-east by a stream and on the south-west probably by the River Frome. Along much of the north side there is a substantial bank about. 1m. high underneath a hedge. The stream on the south-east side has a hedge on either side, each one growing over a low bank. Just inside and running more or less parallel to the boundary is a low bank and ditch going through Great Park and Little Park Mead. There is little evidence of the park boundary on the south-west side, and it is possible that the park extended beyond the River Frome towards Chipping Sodbury. This area is now built up.

It is likely that Park's Farm was originally a park lodge and was converted to a farmhouse around 1600 when the area was disparked; some of the farm outbuildings are probably at least 200 years old. There is no evidence, on the ground or air photographs, of any fishponds in Fishers Ground. The original name, Great Fishweares, may have simply referred to fishing in the River Frome although the site would have been suitable for the construction of fishponds.

Little Sodbury Park (?ST 7483)

Little Sodbury Park is of relatively minor interest, but references to it may be confused with the other Sodbury deer park. A licence for emparking 500 acres at Little Sodbury was granted to John Walshe in 1511 (Cal. Ch. R) and it was noted by Leland in about 1540. But it was probably only short-lived, as it is not heard of again.

Maurice Walshe, descendant of John, acquired the Kings Park, Old Sodbury, when Henry VIII granted him the manor of Old Sodbury in 1546.

The location of Little Sodbury park is highly problematical, not least because if it was wholly within Little Sodbury, it would have taken up almost half this small parish. One possibility is the area around Great House Farm. Two fields nearby were called The Park and Little Park on the Tithe Award (GRO), but that evidence is by no means conclusive. In addition we have not been able to trace any boundaries by field-work. It is recognised that the remains of later medieval deer parks are usually much slighter than early examples.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for allowing us to walk over their farmland: the Earl of Ducie; Mrs Glover of Parks Farm, Tormarton; Mrs Gallop of Yate Court, Mr Hill of Hillhouse Farm and Mr Hames of Tanhouse Farm, Yate; and Mrs Mayman of Parks Farm, Chipping Sodbury.

Abbreviations

BRO	Bristol Record Office
Cal. Ch. R	Calendar of Charter Rolls
Cal. Inq. Misc	Calendar of Inquistions Miscellaneous
Cal. PR	Calendar of Patent Rolls
GRO	Gloucester Record Office
OS	Ordnance Survey

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The plans (figs. 1&2) are based upon early editions of the OS and aerial photographs.

PLACE NAME EVIDENCE in SOUTH AVON

by Michael Costen, Resident Tutor for Somerset
in the Department of Extra Mural Studies and Co-ordinator
for the English Place Name Society survey for Somerset

Place names are easier to discover now than ever before. The publications of the Ordnance Survey give us an enormous amount of information and even those holiday makers who drive from the North to the West Country without any sort of map cannot miss the road signs and village name signs. Even to the uninitiated names are interesting because they seem to mean something, and some names are very easy to decipher. Easton in Gordano is transparently simple. It is the East – **tun** or 'farmstead.' The Gordano part of the name is more difficult. Although the name looks exotic, study of the early forms of the word show that it is unromantically simple, being **gor** – 'filth or mud' + **denu** – 'a valley.' Somewhere in their past all place names had an obvious and easy meaning. It is the passage of time and the inevitable changes of language which have made the names obscure to us. The names also carry a great deal of historical information if we can read them aright.

Although most of Somerset did not fall under English political control until 658, the area of South Avon which lies close to Bath clearly came into English hands much earlier when Ceawlin, King of the West Saxons, killed three British rulers at Dyrham and captured Bath, Cirencester and Gloucester in 577. Clearly English influence must have extended into the country round about the town but it probably did not extend far towards the sea. The earliest English name for Bath is **Hat Bathu** (678) – 'Hot Baths.' Evidently the well known Roman name for the spa had not survived, perhaps because the local inhabitants did not use the name much either. An alternative name for Bath was **Acemannes Ceastre** (973) – 'Acemannes stone city.' Since the name is also used to describe Akemans Street, the Roman Road, as late as the 12th century, it seems likely that the name was widely used. This version of the name is Celtic in origin but obscure in meaning. However it may be the version in use among the local Welsh population in early English times. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the place was called **Bathan Ceaster** – ' the stone town by the baths' in 577; but we cannot be sure that this is right, since the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was written long after the events it describes, during the reign of King Alfred. Bath has good claim to be one of the oldest English names still in use in South Avon. Other local names may well be contemporary with Bath although not so well known nationally. The western section of Wansdyke runs close to the south side of Bath and it has been suggested that it is English work contemporary with the eastern Wansdyke built between 572 and 592. Place name evidence does give this idea some support. The name means 'Wodens Ditch.' This is obviously a reference to the god **Woden** and may be the name given by its builders. They would have been Saxon if this was the case since the native Welsh of the area had long since been Christianised and would not have used the name of a Saxon god.

In the tenth century the earthworks were still called **Wodens dic** and it seems too easy to assume that the name was given because the Christian Saxons of that period called earthworks of an unknown age by that sort of name, just as the Devil was commonly credited with large natural features of the landscape. It seems far more plausible to suggest that **Wodens dic** was the official name by which the defence was known. Close to the western end of the ditch lies Publow. This is an interesting early English place name containing two elements, **Pybba** – a personal male name and **hlaew** which means a 'burial mound.' We know of other examples where this same formation has given rise to similar names. Winterslow in Wiltshire is the burial mound of **Wynta**, and

Cutteslowe in Oxfordshire of **Cutha.** This last named is probably Cuthwulf himself. These last two examples date from the period when the English were still pagans. They are reminders that the English commonly buried important people under ceremonial mounds and that this was a pagan practice akin to the ship burials of Sutton Hoo and Scandinavia, which ceased with the coming of Christianity. Publow may well be the burial site of an important English leader of the late sixth century connected with the defensive earthwork. What tells against this view is, of course, the lack of other pagan English remains in the area. Perhaps the British of the area co-operated with the English against a common enemy coming from the Thames valley area and Pybba died on active service.

Certainly the whole of South Avon has frequent traces of the influence of the native British or Welsh community preserved in the names of places. The presence of a numerous class of native Welsh speakers throughout the whole of the west of England long after the advent of the English themselves is now a common-place of historical comment about the seventh and eighth centuries in this area. Place name studies would tend to confirm this.

One clear feature of South Avon which is common to all the western parts of Britain is that major hill and river names are of Celtic origin and since so many villages and towns get their names from rivers, the Celtic element must be strong. In the landscape of post Roman Britain the rivers and streams formed important landmarks, boundaries and geographical guides. Their names were probably well known to the English long before they arrived and they continued to use the native names they knew when they arrived as conquerors among a much more numerous Welsh speaking population. Avon itself is obvious as a word simply meaning 'River', and there is plenty of evidence to show that it was the name in use before the English landed in Britain. Other rivers debouching into the Avon are also Celtic in their name forms. One of the most mysterious is the Chew. Early forms of this name show it to have developed from **Ciw.** The problem is that as an Old-Welsh word it corresponds with the modern Welsh word **cyw** which means a 'young bird', a 'chick'. This makes it difficult to understand as a river name. The river has given its name to Chew Magna and Chewton Mendip and Chewton Keynsham. Corston brook gave its name to Corston. An early form of the name shows it to have been **Corsantune** ; the **tun** – 'farm', on the Corsan. The river name is probably formed from the Old Welsh word corresponding with the modern Welsh **cors** a 'bog or fen' which originally meant a 'reed or rush'. The Cambrook flows from Cameley past Radford and Camerton to join with the Wellow. Cameley means the **leah** – 'clearing', by the Camelar river. Camerton is **Camelartun** – the **tun** or 'farmstead' on the Camelar. The river name seems to be associated with the Celtic name **Camulo** which is related to the name of the Celtic war-god **Camulos.** Wellow river gives its name to Wellow and also originally to Radstock which was called **Welewestoce** in 984. This Celtic river name probably means 'the twisting or winding stream.' The Old Welsh word is related to the Latin **volvo, volvere.** Other places have names with a Celtic element in them because of the hills around them. Dundry and Dunkerton both contain the Old Welsh word **din** from the British **duno** meaning a hill, while Churchill in the south of the county has the Old Welsh **Cryc,** British **Crouco** – a 'steep hill.' This last is particularly common in the west of England and gives rise to the numerous Churchills and Creeches. Another small group of Welsh names contains references to the appearance of the place; Winford and Wilmington both have the word **Vindo** (modern Welsh 'Gwyn') meaning 'white or bright.'

Only one place certainly contains a Welsh personal name. This is Congresbury,

the **burh** – 'the fortified place of **Congur.**' The village seems to mark the site of the original preaching place of a Celtic missionary, one of the saints whose dedications spread along the seaboard of the Bristol Channel and across Cornwall to Brittany. In this case the saint's religious centre and cult easily survived the political upheavals. **St Ciu** may also have existed at Kewstoke but did not do as well as his other contemporaries.

Old Welsh is well evidenced in the place names of the South Avon area, at least in major place names. Clearly, the survival of Welsh speakers as communities is to be expected but we must not expect too much in the way of minor place and field names with Old Welsh ancestry. The English who came to rule what was then Somerset also came to farm it, for they were peasants. In working the land they naturally gave English names to the fields.

English names predominate in South Avon and it is not really possible to be confident about the relative age of most of them. The earliest names to appear in writing are those in the charters of the Abbey of Bath and from the Glastonbury Abbey charters.

One of the earliest English names to be found in South Avon is Elborough in Hutton, near Weston-super-Mare. The charter in which this name occurs also shows that the alternative Welsh name for the place was **Ceddren,** a name which contains the Old Welsh element **Ceto,** meaning a 'wood.' It seems very likely that some other places with purely English names also had parallel Welsh names which have been lost. The English form of the name means the **beorg** – 'hill' of **Ella.** Although personal names like this are very common in English place names, the earliest names from charters are much less personal in character. North Stoke, Clutton, Farmborough, Wrington, Banwell and Portbury are examples of this kind. 'Stoke' – from the O.E. **stoc** – is a very common name and occurs around Bath at North Stoke and again at South Stoke, which was called **Tottanstoc (Tottas' stoc)** at an early date. The word probably means 'dependant farm', in which case both places can probably be seen as dependant farm settlements of Bath. The **wic,** a 'dependant dairy farm', is even more common in the South West of England and Swainswick, Bathwick, Ashwick, Shockerwick and Standerwick are all good examples of this type of settlement name. Both **stoc** and **wic** names show how settlements which were originally dependent upon **other larger settlements** grow to become independent units, though plenty of examples of 'Wick Farms' can still be found. Clutton means the **clud** 'rock or hill farm' (the same element is found in Temple Cloud) and Farmborough is **Fearnberngas** – the fern covered hill. Wrington is the farm on the 'wring' river. Portbury is the **byrig,** 'fort by the Port.' It seems very probable that we should expect most of the early English settlement names to be of this type. The Stantons, 'stone' **tuns;** the Strattons **tuns** 'on the street;' the Comptons and the Suttons are all of this type.

Where the names of individuals are included in the English name, rather than added in the post-conquest period (as in Norton Malreward), the personal name is usually attached to endings other than **tun.** More often we find Carlingcott – 'the cottage of **Credela',** or Kilmersdon – 'the hill of **Cyncmaer',** or even Vobster – **'Fobba's** tor or rock'. The common compound element in South Avon is **ley** or **leah** which means a 'clearing in the wood'. Examples are Brockley – **'Brocca's** ley'; Ubley- **'Ubba's** ley'. The element **hamm** – 'a meadow or enclosure', occurs with personal names as at Keynsham– **'Caegin's** hamm', and Tickenham – **'Tica's** hamm'. The word **worth** meaning a 'private enclosure' is hidden in Chelwood – **'Ceolla's** worth', while **combes** or steep valleys also

have their owners, as at Englishcombe – **'Ingel's** combe' and Butcombe – **'Buda's** combe'. A fold for sheep is preserved in Bickfield Farm in Compton Martin which is **'Bica's** fold'.

Many dozens of personal names, mostly in use well before the Norman Conquest, are preserved in these place names, compounded with elements such as meadow, enclosure, fold or combe. It might be possible to say that generally the smaller Old English settlements were those which had a personal name attached to them but since most of these names were in general use for quite long periods it is impossible to date settlements from their use.

Although there is now much evidence to suggest that a large proportion of the historic parishes of Somerset and South Avon are extremely ancient in their organisation as civil units, probably predating the English, and being connected with the villa organisation of the late Roman period, it is still possible to see that the organisation of social life which the English developed was not necessarily manorial in concept as the idea of estates with such ancient boundaries might suggest. Examination of charter material, which often preserves local place names which are not available in field name evidence today, shows that the use of personal names in the topographical descriptions of estates was very common. This suggests that individuals were associated with particular features of the landscape because they farmed them as individuals or even owned them.

Corston may well be an estate which has been in existence as a unit of some kind since before the seventh century. Its boundaries were certainly fixed by the early tenth century. Even here the English personal names intrude. **Wifel' combe** is literally 'beetles' combe'. But the same name occurs again as Wiveliscombe in west Somerset. The name was evidently used of a person. **Wimundes stan** 'Wimund's stone', is another boundary mark in the same estate. At Radstock we find Hiceman's stone. At Stanton Prior we find **Wineces byrig** – **'Wineca's** camp' and **Edbyrhting leage** – **'Edburt's** clearing'. The charter for Marksbury shows **Pinikesburgh** – **'Pinnoc's** camp' and **Brihtynglegh** – 'the clearing of the family of **Brihta'**. Priston has **'Aelfriges** stone'. Wrington has **Credelinghales** – 'the corner of the family of **Credela'** and **Suwardinglegh** – 'the clearing of the family of **Suward'**. Ashwick has **Leofricas suth croft** – **'Leofric's** south croft', and Charlcombe has **Beorwines Crudlan** – **'Beorwin's** quarry'. If we can find so many examples of quite small features in the landscape named after individuals it seems right to imagine that those places for which we have no evidence also had plenty of examples. This suggests a landscape in which settlement was widely dispersed rather than gathered into the typically nuclear villages of South Avon in the later medieval period.

The evidence of the place names of South Avon in so far as they have been studied suggests a pattern of early settlement as follows:–

The whole area was well settled and prosperous in Roman times and the area continued to be well populated by Welsh inhabitants right down to the seventh century when they lost political control of the area and allowed in English overlords and the English peasant settlers. Some English immigrants may have arrived much earlier as military allies as at Publow or as settlers in an area not much frequented by the Welsh. The settlement at Locking, if the name is indeed as old as the existing form suggests, would predate all other English settlements in the area by at least one hundred to one hundred and fifty years.

The arrival of the English meant that gradually English names and language, and with them, English culture penetrated these Welsh settlements so that English minor names in the landscape of these settlements are frequent. The English settlements some-

times succeeded in obliterating the names of earlier Welsh settlements and it seems likely that most of the favourable valley sites with English, Welsh or Welsh-English names were originally Welsh settlements. The new English settlements were in areas which had either never been exploited or had become waste before the late sixth century. In areas around Bath such as the Stokes, Bathford, Swainswick and perhaps a little further south, also at such places as Radstock, the English founded new small settlements which were to grow. Later splitting of estates to make holdings for important individuals is probably signified by settlements which took the name of an individual English man. In particular the fine array of 'ington' names just over the border in Somerset, around Frome, including Babington, Hardington, Henington, Ecferdinstone (lost), Luckington and Lullington, probably represents a division of a large Celtic Estate centred on Frome into holdings for individual Englishmen, perhaps in the eighth century. The spread of Old English personal names across quite small features of the landscape even at quite an early date, suggests that settlement was well dispersed and that South Avon was well settled, with almost all the inhabited sites of early modern times occupied by the tenth century. The relative rarity of **leah** – 'clearing in the wood' and **wudu** – 'wood', **graf** – 'grove or cultivated wood', and the complete absence of words such as **weald** – 'forest', suggests that woodland was relatively scarce in the area and that there were no great areas of forest which have since disappeared, while the references to sheep walks and arable land in Saxon charters, point to an agricultural economy recognisably like that of the post-conquest period, by the tenth century.

Further study of minor place names and field names will produce more evidence to confirm or refute these suggestions but the material already available appears to provide a fairly firm basis for the view that South Avon was much as it is now by the tenth century.

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ASPECTS OF EDUCATION IN THE PARISH OF HINTON CHARTERHOUSE

Dorothy Withers

Hinton Charterhouse parish is now in the new County of Avon. The parish boundaries have remained static since the Domesday Survey; the eastern one is still that of the County of Wiltshire but the Southern one has now become the boundary of Avon and Somerset. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, as now there were large farms surrounding a central village with various hamlets on the boundaries. Two cloth mills in the neighbouring parish of Freshford also provided some employment for Hinton.

In 1826 the Reverend Thomas Spencer arrived as the first resident Vicar in the parish after its separation from Norton St. Philip. He was a Cambridge scholar, uncle and tutor of the famous philosopher Herbert Spencer and he returned to his College from Hinton on all appropriate occasions. He was also an energetic, practical man. Feeling shocked by the 'ignorant and degraded population' of the parish, he immediately set about providing a school and other benefits for the parishioners. He applied for a grant from The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales, which had been founded in 1811. He persuaded Mrs Day, the widow of a local landowner living at Hinton House, to grant the necessary land in Wellow Lane for the building and opened a quarry on land he purchased in the Midford Road, to provide the stone.

He preached in the Church on January 21st 1827 and took up a collection for the proposed School. Mrs Day wrote in her diary, 'I did not go to Church. I had a cold. Mr. Spencer took up a collection for his Sunday School. I sent £1'. Mr. Spencer wrote

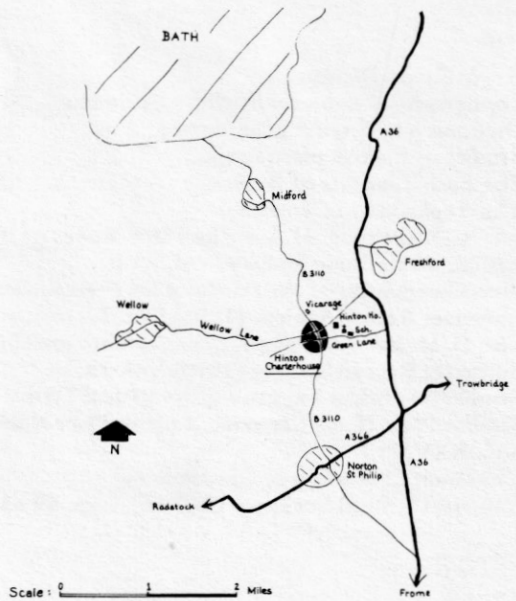

Fig. 3. Sketch map to show the location of Hinton Charterhouse.

to thank her for her donation saying, The collection was £7 which is a handsome sum for this Parish and does credit to their good feeling. He also described his pleasure in the news that the National Society was making a grant of £100. 'This enables us to secure to all future ages the education of the children of Hinton in the **principles of the Established Church** and from the nature of the Society's rules will always cause them **to attend the Parish Church** to which from their earliest days they will form that attachment which the venerable establishment of our Church so well deserves'. Unfortunately, there was some misunderstanding and Mrs Day and other parishioners thought that the grant was for a Sunday School not a day school.

The people knew of the writings of Hannah More and of the Sunday Schools she had initiated in Somerset. She had written 'The problem of poverty in the lower classes is mainly religious and not economic or social. In Sunday School the children learn to read the Bible, imbibe good morals and recognise their position in Society.' The ladies of the Parish thoroughly approved of these sentiments but when it was realised that a day school was intended many objections were made – from farmers who had work for the children, from parents who needed the 6d. per day paid by the farmers and possibly from those who feared a literate populace. After an enquiry was held at the Town Hall the Reverend Spencer expressed his horror in a letter to Mrs Day, that even she had believed he was only building a Sunday School! However, all objections were over-ruled and the Reverend Spencer calmed local suspicion by his enthusiasm. The first stone of the new school was laid by Mrs Day on September 18th 1827 and the building of two rooms, 20' by 14' and 20' by 12' was finished ready for the opening day in May 1828. The school opened in Wellow Lane with 140 children present, 110 from Hinton and 30 from Freshford and neighbouring hamlets. Hinton children paid 1d. per week and those from outside the parish paid ½d. more; subscribers of 10 shillings a year could nominate a child free. The chief subscribers were Mrs Day and Mr Spencer, donating £3 each while lesser amounts were given by people in Hinton, Freshford and Bath.

The children were taught by monitors, who were selected older children, under the complete supervision of work and discipline by the master. The master had been trained in the Monitorial System, planned by Dr Bell, and used exclusively by the National Society. 'Teachers are trained as every boy in the School to understand the System not by lectures and abstract instruction.' By 1821 'the System' was perfected to train a teacher in six weeks.

The first week the teacher learnt as a boy in the lowest class the alphabet cards and combinations of vowels and consonants, followed by a book dealing with these and syllabic reading. The following weeks tracts were read on various Bible stories including the Sermon of the Mount. The last week was spent teaching and if satisfactory a certificate was given. Then the trained teacher took charge of a school like Hinton. The emphasis was on discipline and good order and after a time the Reverend Spencer felt gratified to invite the subscribers to visit the school and see the results. 'Large numbers of children have been for some time under the best discipline and have made considerable progress, not only in reading and religious knowledge of their duty to God and Man, but many of them have been taught to work and knit and now both Girls and Boys are able to make good stockings being thus furnished with the means of serving their families and of earning an honest maintenance for themselves.' The customer provided the worsted; men's stockings cost 9d. and women's 7d.. Half of this was earned by the pupil and half provided a welcome addition to the teacher's meagre salary of £15 per annum and the pennies collected from the children. Being satisfied

Plates 1 and 2: School in Green Lane built about 1860 on the site of the Malthouse Girls School, Hinton Charterhouse.

with the progress of the school, the Reverend Spencer with Mrs Day's agreement built two new rooms to provide free accommodation for the teacher. Later it was found expedient to build a small room for the infants, as parents begged to send the under-fives as they could not earn money for the household. Children were employed, 'bird-minding,' planting potatoes and harvesting the new ones, collecting firewood and gleaning during harvest.

In 1833 the Reverend Spencer inaugurated a Clothing Club for the benefit of the Parishioners and created a system of Allotments to be cultivated to benefit the children's diet. He also planned a lending library in the village and later claimed that he spent over £1000 of his private means to benefit parishioners. By 1839 an Education Department had been set up by the Government under Kaye Shuttleworth. The monitors were to be replaced by Pupil Teachers who had had some education themselves. To become a paid Pupil Teacher a child stayed at school for a five year apprenticeship after the age of thirteen. We can judge how the school had changed since 1827 as now the expectation from the brightest pupils was as follows:

'They must be able to read with fluency, ease and expression and to write in a neat hand a simple prose narrative with correct spelling and punctuation. They must be able to write from dictation and to be able to point out the parts of speech in simple sentences. They should be able to tackle sums in the first four rules of simple and compound Arithmetic and to know the tables of weights and measures. They should be able to repeat the Catechism and show that they understand its meaning and to know the outline of the Scripture History to the satisfaction of the Clergyman of the Parish. They should have an elementary knowledge of geography. The girls should be able to sew and knit.'

At the end of the five years, if they could teach satisfactorily they would be awarded a certificate qualifying them as Paid Monitors. Hinton employed one Teacher who took the oral lessons and two Pupil Teachers who assisted with the written work. The Reverend Spencer left Hinton in 1847 to be followed by the Reverend Giradot.

In Green Lane near the Church was the Poorhouse which had been founded by Captain Symonds of the Priory many years before. By the Act of Union in 1835 the Parish was no longer responsible for its own paupers and by 1840 the new Workhouse was in use at St Martin's in Bath. The village poorhouse became a Malt House until purchased by the Reverend Palairet, Vicar of Norton St Philip in 1848. The building was immediately altered to accommodate the girls while the boys continued at the school in Wellow Lane under Mrs Kemp. When she left in 1851, Mr Kearney took charge of the boys' school and Mrs Kearney of the girls' school.

Other schools developed and began to rival Hinton School. In 1850 the Vicar of Freshford opposed the building of a church school there but some influential people combined with a retired vicar to build the present school. A Methodist School (in a building now disused) had been operating for a while in Freshford. In Midford a school under the auspices of the Roman Catholics had been provided through the owners of Midford Castle. With these new schools and small private 'Select Schools' in use the numbers at Hinton dropped considerably.

In 1856 the new schoolmaster's house in Green Lane was built for Mr. and Mrs. Kearney and in 1860 the Malthouse Girl's School was demolished to build the present school on the site, planned by the architect W. White under the auspices of Edward

Jones of Hinton House. The new school in Green Lane contained two rooms, one for the Juniors and a small one for the Infants, well ahead of the 1871 Act which specified the need for separate rooms. Robert Lowes' Act of 1862 made it compulsory to provide Education for children from 5 – 10 years of age with power to retain any who wished to stay longer. In spite of this Act Hinton children continued to be absent when needed in the fields or the girls to nurse the sick or mind the baby while Mother went washing. The sheets of Regency Bath were brought out to Freshford for washing. In her diary Mrs Day notes 'washing,' about once a month in the summer. The four week summer holiday was given when the children would be off 'gleaning', but in 1879 the Log Book notes that, 'The prospects for harvest are so poor that the holidays will be taken for the hay and not the corn'. Children were now needed to work in industry and the mines so no grant would be given for children over the age of 12. Infants were to be accepted into school so that, 'they are withdrawn from evil and corrupt influences and disciplined to proper habits but some positive instruction should be given.'

The new code of 1871 made education compulsory but laid down that children must be exempt at 10 if they wished. Children at Hinton left at 10 to go to work and always there was work waiting for leavers. The new code also laid down qualifications for teachers, either by training or by satisfactory recognised service. Mr Kearney of Hinton was one of the first to be recognised with a 3rd class Certificate by reason of satisfactory reports on his work for the previous ten years. Unfortunately, having gained the Certificate he felt it necessary to move to a larger school for an increased salary. He was succeeded by a Certificated Headmistress and a paid Monitress. These also left for larger schools as they qualified for increased salary. During this time, the Vicar came in to take Scripture lessons and various School Managers came to take Dictation, Singing and occasionally English. An Army Sergeant was engaged by the Vicar to take drill but it is noticeable that many were absent on his days. On inspection days attendance was always noted as 100%.

In 1874 tradesmen were asked to pay 6d. per week for their children much to their annoyance. Some were withdrawn for other schools to avoid payment but all returned after a short interval. The school was forced to close on several occasions as the children went hay making, harvesting or planting. Epidemics of measles, whooping cough, mumps and chicken pox decimated the children on several occasions causing the school to be closed for one, two or four weeks.

The system of 'payment by results' meant that the Head Teacher had to submit a syllabus for the following year's examination to Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Here is a typical syllabus taken from the Log Book.

1. **Object Lessons**
   1. The Horse
   2. The Cow
   3. The Dog
   4. The Beaver
   5. The Sheep
   6. The Camel
   7. Sugar
   8. Iron
   9. Coal
   10. Tea
   11. Garden
   12. A House
   13. A Knife
   14. A Fork
   15. A Chair
   16. Form
   17. Colour
   18. Face of the Clock
   19. Truth
   20. Punctuality

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For a week or two every lesson would centre round the given topic. I well remember that into the 1930's this method lingered and it was necessary every Monday morning to produce a plan for the topic of the week, to be approved by the Headmistress.

2. **Poetry – to be inspected**

Infants and Standard I	The Two Kittens
Standard II	Little Jim
Standard III	We are Seven
Standards IV, V, VI	Selection from King John

Elementary Geography and Arithmetic were included in the examination. Annual examination into Religious Instruction was carried out but did not affect the Grant awarded by the Inspectors.

By 1890 numbers in school rose again to 92 when 3 year olds could be admitted. When the children returned after the harvest holiday on September 3rd 1891 schools were declared free so attendance could be more strictly enforced. In 1893 the Infants room was so overcrowded that the HMI ordered urgent action or the grant would be discontinued. In 1894 the school closed for a month in June to break a severe measles epidemic and when the children returned they found the builders on the site. Work was impossible so the children moved to the Coffee Rooms, in the present Memorial Hall, Juniors downstairs and Infants upstairs. The infant room was being lengthened by 11 feet to its present dimensions 28 x 14 x 21 feet. Although the junior room at 30 x 16 x 21 feet was ready on October 8th, the infants remained at the Coffee rooms until the following April. Their new room had a large platform with steps and there were new toilet facilities for everyone. There was now a qualifying examination for leaving at the age of 10 – a Labour Certificate to be gained in an examination held at Norton St Philip, although it is noted that one boy defied his lack of certificate and was able to continue in work.

In 1895 payment by results ended but teachers were loth to cast off the yearly syllabus. These last years of the century showed a decline in rural populations and there was corresponding pressure for children to work in the mines and factories rather than on the farms where the introduction of some machinery decreased the need for child labour. Many families left Hinton but three year olds were again admitted to keep the school full. In 1898 the Junior room was improved by a block floor and new desks were introduced. This century brought an advance in teachers' training. Qualifications for Secondary Schools necessitated the education of pupils to a higher level and more Training Colleges were giving academic and pedagogic training to students. The first college trained teacher came to Hinton in 1902 but the calendar of epidemics and closures continued as before.

The Code of 1904 shows the change in ideals. 'The purpose of the Elementary School is to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it and to assist the children according to their different needs to fit themselves for the work of life. To implant in the children habits of industry, self-control and courageous perseverance in the face of difficulties so that they will be ready for self-sacrifice and strive to the utmost after purity and truth.'

In September 1905 a great improvement was made by the addition of a new playground and later the infants room was altered to make its furnishings more suitable and the gallery smaller. December 1909 brought the first Medical Inspection of heads by the County Nurse and 1913 saw the first visit of the County Dentist, but still the

epidemics continued as before. The Act of 1918 made it compulsory for children to remain at school until they attained fourteen years of age. The 1923 Suggestions stated, 'Scholars should be trained to be industrious, self-reliant, able to make a sustained effort in face of difficulties. Nothing should be done for a child that it can do for itself.' In 1924 the first Physical Exercise Syllabus was issued by the Board of Education and Organised Games were put on the Syllabus.

In 1926 the first examinations for eleven year olds were held and successful pupils went to Frome Grammar School or into Bath. On November 4th 1930 in the general re-organisation of schools 8 children were removed to Combe Down Senior School. The Board of Education's 'Suggestions for Teachers' commented of this change: 'The new school is not to be considered as a school that has been decapitated but new opportunities are now given to understand and develop the abilities of the 5 – 11 range in a family spirit. The teacher should impress the importance of good manners, courtesy and consideration for others, develop self-reliance, self-control, thrift, punctuality, kindness to animals and fair play. Children should behave in the community at large in a manner consistent with self-respect and a sense of humour.'

Another pointer to the change in living conditions is shown in the new title of the National Society which sponsored the first school for the, 'Education of the Poor'; now it became the 'National Society for Promoting Religious Education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England among all our subjects living in England and Wales irrespective of age or degree.'

Numbers of children in school were so reduced (down to 16 at one time) that only one teacher was allowed and epidemics continued so that one new headmistress arriving to take up her duties found only 4 children present.

In 1938 library books from Somerset County Library were first introduced to school. The old desks were removed and modern tables and chairs were introduced. 1940 saw the evacuees admitted only to be involved in an epidemic of chickenpox and German measles. The first free milk of $\frac{1}{3}$ pint was made available. In June the windows were taped to avoid the splintering of glass from bomb damage. In the event of a raid the children were to be taken to lie down under the trees at the end of the playground. Waste paper was collected for the War Effort and iron dumb-bells were sent for scrap. 1942 saw the introduction of hot dinners at school which proved to be very popular. In 1943 the first School Sports were held and broadcast lessons in History and Geography came on to the timetable.

The 1944 Act was a revolutionary declaration in comparison with the ideas at the time of the founding of the school. 'Every child should be educated in accordance with its age, ability and aptitude, producing justice for the less gifted and the handicapped. There must be equality of opportunity for all children wherever they live by providing free education, with the necessary books, equipment and materials. There should be continuous assessment of abilities to enable children to profit to the full when transferred to Secondary Education.' The school leaving age was raised to 15 to enable children to take full advantage of the Secondary School curriculum. On May 16th 1952 the order securing Aided Status for the school was sealed by the Minister of Education. This put on the Managers the obligation to set aside annually a Capitation Repair Rate of 10/- per year for each child but this was a small liability in comparison with the privileges and advantages of Aided Status which the school enjoys.

From November 1953 the official title of the school became 'Hinton Charterhouse Voluntary Aided Primary School.'

Aims from the Ministry had now developed into 'to teach quiet and controlled movement is more important than to teach children to sit still. The object to be achieved is to awaken interest in the child so that he will persevere along profitable lines of activity suitable to his stage of development. It is futile to attempt to teach young children according to a logical scheme but the curriculum must direct a special approach to subjects giving a sense of mastery over self and circumstances.'

During the 60's there were several alarms that the school might be closed and the children transferred to Norton St Philip but after reviews closure has been avoided. In the 70's the old coal shed was converted to a very useful store room and **Hot Water** installed in the children's wash basins bringing the building up to the standards required.

Today is a far cry from the traditional regime of rigid rows of desks fixed to the floor where the children sat immobile, eyes on teacher, giving back the information given to them in complete uniformity. 'The first aim is the development of the pre-conceived notions of another person, with the right to health, happiness and self-expression but also as an inherent member of society so that he has a full realisation that his good is the world's and the world's good is his own.'

Through all these changes of philosophy the school has progressed safely with its firm foundation in the faith of the Established Church. How much the Parish owes to the Reverend Thomas Spencer who began it all a hundred and sixty years ago but now lies unheeded in the churchyard at Hinton Charterhouse.

References

MSS Letters written by Rev. Spencer to Mrs Day.
Diary of Mrs Day for 1827.
School Log Book commencing December 1871.
Rich, E. W. – *Training Teachers in the Nineteenth Century*
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Acknowledgement

I should like to thank the archivists of the National Society for Promoting Religious Education for their assistance.

D. W.

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ARCHAEOLOGY IN AVON, 1978

Compiled by R. Iles.

There have been two significant developments on the administrative side in Avon in 1978. The first was the publication of the County Structure Plan Situation Report on the Historic Enviroment, including both historic buildings and archaeology. This report should in due course be followed by the publication of policies governing land use planning in respect of the historic environment. The second development was the establishment of an Advisory Committee for the Historic Enviroment in Avon, composed of representatives from Avon Local History Association, Avon Archaeolocial Council, museums, and the County Planning Department and Library. On a more practical level the Survey and Archaeology Group in Avon (SAGA) has been set up specifically to carry out detailed field survey.

The Sites and Monuments Record in the County Planning Department has been set up with the assistance of a temporary team of four graduates, financed by the Manpower Services Commission (STEP) in 1978. The team carried out a fair amount of fieldwork, particularly in those parts such as Northavon where there are few records. They also checked vertical air photographs, including those taken 1945 – 7, for Northavon. Detailed plotting of features shown on air photographs has been done for South West Avon by Richard Mcdonnell of CRAAGS and the results will be deposited with Avon Sites and Monuments Record. The primary purpose of the Sites and Monuments Record is for use in the planning process, but it is also available for genuine researchers to consult; it should be of value to both local historians and archaeologists.

In the period 1966 – 1977 the **Archaeological Review** was published, covering South West England and Wessex. A notable achievement of that journal was to include notes on fieldwork and casual finds as well as short progress reports on excavations. Since its demise many established County archaeological societies have published an annual review of local material. Some brief notes for Avon in 1976 and 1977 were published in Avon Archaeological Newsletter and the South Avon material duplicated in the Proceedings of Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

The following notes are arranged first by period and then according to parish; a short note on medieval fishponds in Avon is appended. These notes for 1978 represent only a short summary of some of the archaeology in Avon for that year, and it is hoped that they can be improved in future. I acknowledge my thanks to all contributors and anyone else who has provided material for Avon Site and Monuments Record.

PREHISTORIC

N. S. Ryan of Cardiff University completed a thesis on the Archaeology of the Lower Chew Valley. A copy has been deposited with Avon Sites and Monuments Record.

BACKWELL ST.4949 6807 A small section of Backwell hill-fort has been relocated. It was previously thought to have been all destroyed by quarrying fifty years ago. (M. Glasson)

CLAPTON-IN-GORDANO ST.47C 733 A bronze age flat axe was found on the summit of St. Nicholas Wood by G. Prater. (Georgina Plowright)

CLEVEDON ST.4111 7252 A stone burial cist, at 17 The Avenue, was re-excavated by the Clevedon Archaeological Society. The cist, measuring 3ft. 6in. by 2ft. 6in. internally, has a double wall of Pennant Slabs and is orientated SE/NW.

COMPTON DANDO ST.662 639 Several flints have been found in this area including a barbed and tanged arrowhead. (N. Ryun)

OLDLAND ST.6551 7145 Late Neolithic/Bronze Age arrowhead and scraper/knife were found on a building site at Ventura Farm. (P. Ellis)

OLDBURY ST.6103 9283 A small rescue excavation by R. Howell and R. Iles at Oldbury Camp produced the first finds known from this site, whose date has been in dispute. The pottery found is probably prehistoric and sections of the inner bank and ditch were drawn.

OLVESTON ST.6260 8830 Probable round barrow located on Stroud Common by V. Hallett, and a flint scatter nearby at ST.6200 8715.

PORTBURY ST.522 747 and ST.514 748 Two circular enclosures, probably of Iron Age date, and Celtic fields at ST.516 746. (D. Thackray)

SODBURY ST.7700 8100 A rectangular enclosure was found by the STEP team, but no finds were observed.

THORNBURY ST.631 905 Two adjacent flint scatters have been noted by Mr. C. Burgess. (Georgina Plowright)

TIMSBURY ST.6732 5833 A bronze age flint scraper and flint flakes were found during construction of a sewage pipe trench. (P. Ellis)

TYTHERINGTON ST.6833 8863 A neolithic macehead was found close to Stidcot Farm and retained by a farmer. (R. Howell)

ST.6850 8912 Several flints including a bronze age arrowhead have been found by R. Howell.

ROMAN

BRISTOL ST.539 769 'Celtic' fields were noted by D. Thackray in Shirehampton Park.

ST.568 745 A survey of ancient fields and enclosures on Clifton Down has been completed by SAGA. (R. Iles)

ST.569 758 A Roman bronze coin of Vespasion (69 – 70) was found by Mr. Keefe between Sea Mills Station and the river. (Georgina Plowright)

ST.552 760 A Roman coin, imitation bronze of Claudius, was found in the garden of 7 Abbeywood Drive, by Mrs. Cashman. (Georgina Plowright)

ST.546 775 A 2nd Century trumpet brooch was found by R. Strange. (Georgina Plowright)

COMPTON DANDO ST.6335 6700 A coin of Valentinian I or II was found in the former garden of Queen Charlton Manor. (Georgina Plowright)

DYRHAM ST.746 754 'Celtic' fields have been noted in Dyrham Park by D. Thackray.

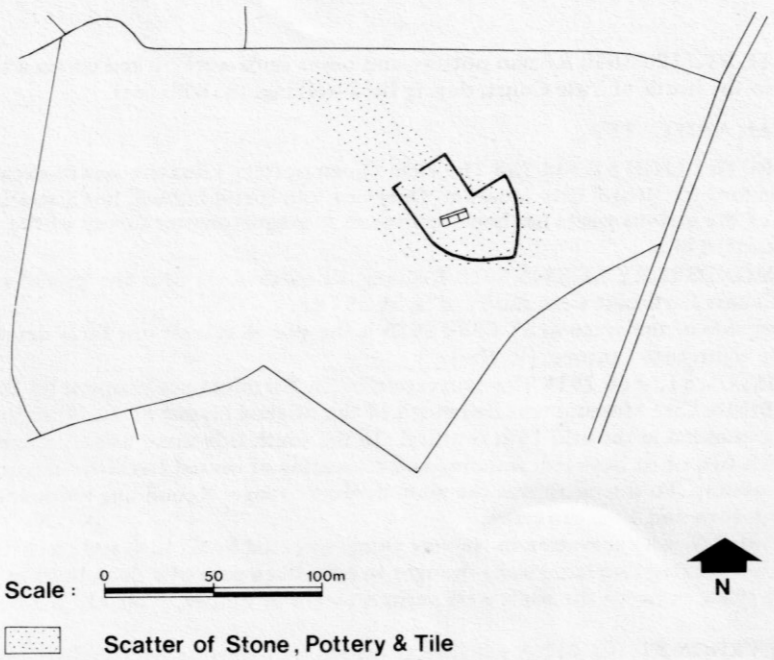
HAWKESBURY ST.803 902 The field with a crop mark of a helmet-shaped enclosure and single corridor villa (?) was field walked by STEP team after ploughing. Large quantities of tile, comparatively little pottery and one possible tessera were found (fig. 4). (R. Iles)

HINTON CHARTERHOUSE ST.797 579 Roman villa found by Miss Cartwright on her Iford Estate.

HUTTON ST.3688 5837 There are lynchets of an ancient field system on Elborough Hill to west of and probably associated with the small enclosure, discovered by E. K. Tratman. (R. Iles)

ST.3398 5873 Scatter of Romano-British pottery found during construction of housing estate, by H. Coward.

KEWSTOKE ST.323 659 (Area) 4th-Century coin of Valentinian found under public seat on Swallow Cliff, Kewstoke.



KINGSWOOD ST.649 734 A Roman coin of Constantine the Great and struck 330 – 335 was found in the garden of 6 Court Road. (Georgina Plowright)

LONG ASHTON ST.550 714 Some Roman pottery found in Church Wood will be deposited in Bristol Museum.

STEEP HOLM In the course of conservation work on the medieval priory, twenty-one sherds of Roman pottery were recovered; they are the first Roman finds from the island. Other recent work has included recording field boundaries and military installations. (S. Rendell)

STOKE GIFFORD ST.617 800 A second season of excavation on the Romano-British settlement was directed by Dr. Parker of Bristol University Classics and Archaeology Department. Several structures, iron slag and bronze scrap were found. Two burials cut into the Roman Structures, appear to predate the abandonment of the site.

WESTON-IN-GORDANO ST.448 743 A Roman coin hoard was probably left in the area of the centre of the village. Well over a dozen coins have been found in a small area over 20 years, but no other finds. Most of the coins were minted circa 350.

(R. Iles)

WESTON-SUPER-MARE ST.347 634 Lynchets of a 'Celtic' field system exist on the golf course on the east end of Worlebury Hill. (Jane Evans and R. Iles)

ST.3646 6332 Romano-British sherds were found during deep drainage work by P. Ellis.

WHITCHURCH ST.601 689 Two Roman quern stones found by Mr. Harper in 1974 will be deposited in Bristol Museum. The area has now been built over.

(Georgina Plowright)

WINTERBOURNE ST.657 812 A Roman silver denarius of Caracella (205AD) was found in 1956. (A. Parker)

Fig. 4. Plan of Roman enclosure and villa, Hawkesbury.

YATE ST.7120 8640 Roman pottery and other finds were picked up on a slight platform to the north of Yate Court, during field walking. (S. Williams)

MEDIEVAL AND LATER

ABBOTS LEIGH ST.534 758 The Ham Green pottery kilns site was re-excavated by M. Ponsford for Bristol City Museum. Only one kiln is still known, but a stratified sequence of the various wares has been recovered. A magnetometer survey of the area has been carried out.

ALMONDSBURY ST.6345 8428 Rectangular earthworks near the 'green' settlement of Gaunts Earthcott were surveyed by the STEP.
On another side of the green at ST.6382 8423 is the site of at least one farm deserted by the late eighteenth century. (R. Iles)

BRISTOL ST.5866 7319 The excavation of St. Barthlomews Hospital by Dr. R. Price for Bristol City Museum revealed much of the original layout of the Hospital which was founded in the mid-13th century. On the south side there was an aisled chapel, with two of its bays still standing and consisting of reused freestone from a Norman building. To the north was the main domestic range. Rebuilding work took place in the 14th and 15th centuries.

ST.586 726 An excavation in Narrow Quay, directed by G. L. Good for Bristol City Museum located two large walls thought to have been part of a dock built in 1625. Within the space between the walls were various pieces of timber, probably the remains of a ship.

CLEVEDON ST.403 712 A salvage excavation by Clevedon Archaeology Society on a building site at West Way uncovered five inhumations. Four of the burials were extended and aligned E/W. It is likely that they are of post-Roman date similar to others in this area often found close to Roman settlements of temples. (Jane Evans and Jean Dagnall)

COLD ASHTON ST.758 731 Probable site of windmill mound. (Pat Jones)

HAWKESBURY ST.766 886 Settlement remains, moat and pillow mounds recorded by STEP team at Lovetts Wood Farm.

HANHAM ABBOTS ST.648 705 Vague earthworks near Hanham Court possibly represent remains of the lost Settlement of East Hanham. (R. Iles)

HORTON ST.764 850 Medieval Settlement remains, holloways and house platforms have been noted near the church. (D. Thackray)

HUTTON ST.353 599 A silver penny of Edward II was found near the rectory by Mr. D. Ford. (Georgina Plowright)

KEYNSHAM ST.655 683 Medieval and later pottery was recovered from 70 – 72 Temple Street during rebuilding. A large pit-like feature at the rear was probably a filled-in well. (N. Ryun)

LONG ASHTON ST.548 703 An extensive excavation of an area of earthworks thought to have been a deserted medieval village was directed by Dr. R. Leech for the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon Gloucestershire and Somerset. Five enclosures were examined; one was of the 11th Century and two were of 12th – 13th Century; little structural evidence was apparent probably because buildings were of cob. A probable medieval mill was also examined. In conjunction with the excavations detailed historical research, fieldwork and survey of all buildings pre-1760 in the parish were carried out. The earthworks around Kingcott Farm, itself a 15th-Century hall house, were surveyed. At least eight house platforms, possibly of Romano-British date, survive to the west of Kingcott Farm. To the south and east are other house platforms, certainly medieval and individually identified from documentary sources.

NEWTON ST. LOE ST.694 639 A third season of excavations on St. Loe's Castle

were directed by C. J. Arnold for Bath College of Higher Education. Work was concentrated between the angle of the curtain wall and the north side of the keep. A north wing was found of the same date as the keep and demolished in the eighteenth century.

ST.6960 6465 Several slight platforms possibly indicate the former site of a small hamlet in Newton Park. A few sherds of medieval pottery were found. (R. Iles)

OLDLAND ST.658 720 A small excavation just outside of the moat of Barr's Court is being conducted by Kingswood and District Local History Society and Bristol Archaeological Research Group. (Mollie Ashley)

ST.6551 7145 Building foundations, drains and the remains of an early 18th-century clay pipe kiln were found during road construction.

OLVESTON ST.6233 8726 A scatter of medieval pottery and limestone rubble in a ploughed field probably indicates a small medieval settlement. (V. Hallett)

ST.6053 8657 A holloway and platforms probably indicate a settlement, but no finds recovered as yet. (V. Hallett)

STOKE GIFFORD ST.6218 7910 The shrunken settlement remains at the north end of Harry Stoke were recorded by the STEP team. The moat shown on the Ordnance Survey six inch map is probably only a pond.

ST.6250 8007 There are a number of earthworks on the west side of Stoke Gifford some of which are probably house platforms. (J. Hunt)

THORNBURY ST.6198 9092 The earthworks of a mill site, previously unknown were recorded near Yew Tree Farm. They are now being infilled. (R. Iles)

ST.6230 9053 A grassy hollow running E/W lies across a ploughed field with much material on each side, including bone, slag, stone and about 20 sherds of 13th – 15th century pottery. It is likely that these remains represent part of Kingston, which moved westward when Thornbury (Holm) Park was created in the early 16th Century. (R. Iles)

TORTWORTH ST.704 934 The site of Tortworth Court was probably moated when it was in the medieval deer park. There are several pillowmounds to the south-west. (R. Iles)

WESTON-SUPER-MARE ST.362 637 Air photographs seem to show a possible bailey enclosure attached to the motte at Castle Batch. (Jane Evans)

MEDIEVAL FISHPONDS by R. Iles

Ponds were created specifically for the breeding and stocking of fish during the Middle Ages. They appear to have been a manorial privilege, like dovecots and warrens, and might be expected to occur close to the **curia** or manorial compound where there is suitable drainage. Documentary references to fishponds are infrequent, but if searched thoroughly manorial and other records would help interpret some of the surviving examples. It is known from records that in addition to the deliverate construction of fishponds, other areas of man-made and non-stagnant water were sometimes also stocked with fish such as moats and mill-ponds. Fishponds, apart from those created for ornamental purposes, seem to have gone out of use in the 16th and 17th centuries, although the idea is now being taken up again.

Until the era of 'landscape' and 'total' archaeology within the last decade, fishponds and other medieval earthworks (except villages), have been largely ignored or misinterpreted. Their remains are now fast disappearing in the countryside. The four groups (fig. 5) described here have either been destroyed in the last couple of years or are at risk. There are basically two methods of constructing ponds: the simplest is to build a dam across a small valley; the other method is to embank an area and construct water channels with sluices to and from the nearest stream. Both of these types

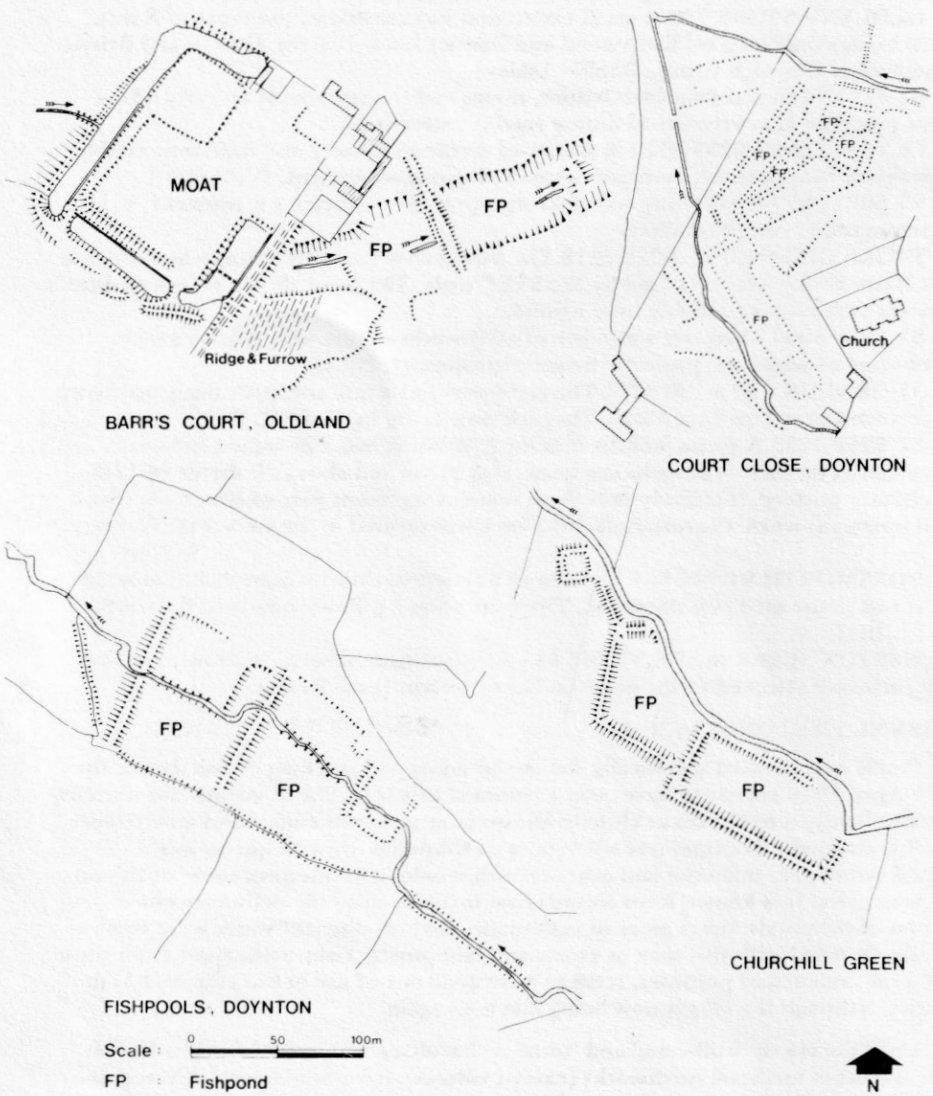


Fig. 5. Plans of medieval fishponds in Avon.

existed at Doynton. I am grateful to the following: Peter Ellis for allowing me to use his plan of Barr's Court; the STEP team for their help in surveying; and Andy Patch for drawing the final plans.

1. **Barr's Court Moat Oldland ST.658 720**

Water drained out of Barr's Court Moat on the south-east side and immediately passed through two fishponds (dry in 1978), each with a small dam across the narrow valley. The plan is based upon a survey by P. Ellis of CRAAGS and an aerial photograph (West Air 20181). The whole area is being developed for housing, only the interior of the moat will be preserved.

2. **Court Close, Doynton ST.7204 7418**

The earthworks of a complex series of sub-rectangular ponds lie in the field north west of the church. The field, known as Court Close on the Tithe Award, was probably close to the medieval manor. The fishponds are on a slight spur between two small streams which run into the river Boyd. The remaining earthworks are between 0.50m and 2.00m high. The long pond to the west of the church was infilled a few years ago, but it is shown on a J. K. St. Joseph air photograph (AIP 22) taken in 1966. The site, when visited by the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments in 1971, was merely described as '..... Closes and sunken streets.....' There are in the western corner of the field three slight building platforms, not directly related to the fishponds.

3. **Fishpools, Doynton ST.7260 7400**

This is a simple series of three ponds in a field known as Fishpools. They were constructed by damming a small stream and there slight traces of small secondary banks either side and parallel to the stream. The main banks, forming the dam, were almost 2.50m high but they have all now been levelled.

4. **Churchill Green, Churchill ST.422 606**

These sub-rectangular ponds lie parallel to a small stream which is the parish boundary between Churchill and Congresbury. The banks are between 1.50m and 2.00m high, and there are small humps in the central pond which are slightly lower (not shown on plan). Those raised areas, and similar ones on the edge of ponds in Court Close, Doynton, were probably covered by shallow water and were possibly made to encourage spawning. The plan is based upon an Avon County Council vertical aerial photograph (10/9080) taken in 1975.

There are other examples of fishponds in Avon including Acton Court, Iron Acton (ST.678 840), Holm Park, Thornbury (ST.638 913) and Horton (ST.7665 8515). They are also known or suspected in certain localities from documentary references (e.g. St. Catherine and Prior Park, Bath) and fieldnames (e.g. Dayhouse Farm, Hillesley). Small fishponds, called stewponds, existed to keep large numbers of fish for short periods; probable examples of this type include a deep rectangular pond south of Thornbury (ST.634 896) and the (now in-filled) fishpond behind Saltford Manor. Also of note are the fisheries along the banks of the Severn, carried out by netting and traps from the shore; although they have been in use in recent times there are medieval references to them from Henbury Saltmarsh to Oldbury-on-Severn and beyond into Gloucestershire.

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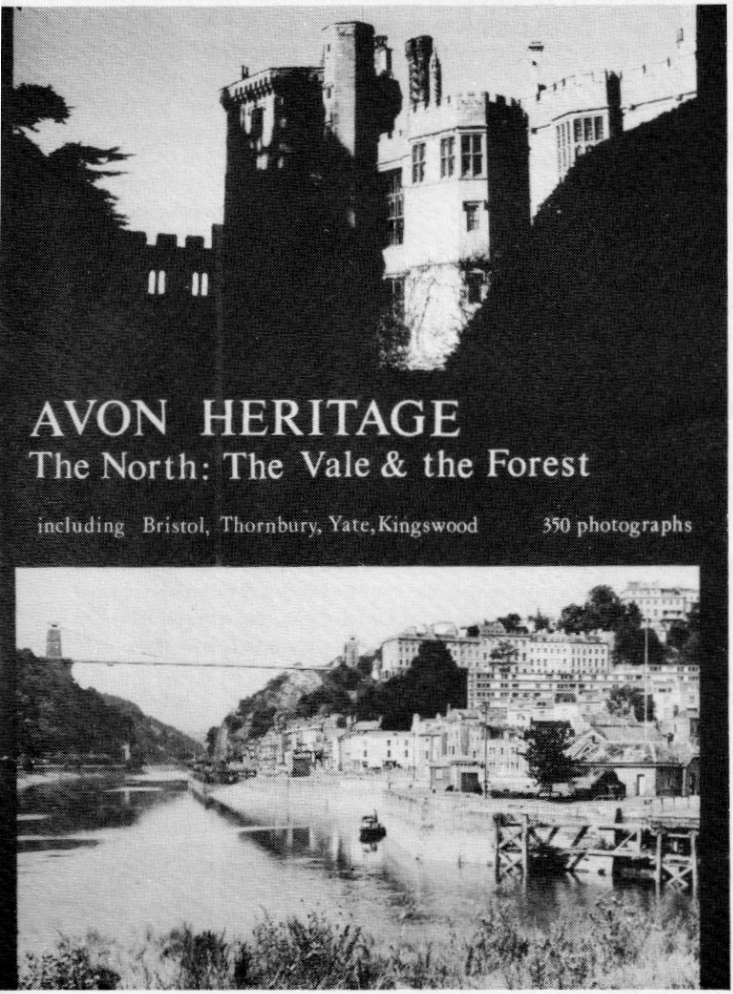

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PUBLICATION REVIEWS

EXCAVATIONS AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL BRISTOL

Published for Bristol Threatened History Society at 70 pence

It is a pity that this attractively produced and otherwise admirable little booklet should be spoiled by one or two errors which tend to confuse the reader. This apart, however, those concerned are to be congratulated on producing a 'popular' account of an excavation relatively soon after completion of the excavation. The format is very clear, the text informative, the diagrams uncluttered and the three well reproduced plates nicely cover the range from broad view to fine detail.

It is to be hoped that sales justify the effort and that similar booklets will be produced for other excavations in the County.

T. W. C.

CHURCH TREASURES IN BRISTOL

by Bryan Little, Redcliffe Press, 1979, £1.00

This is a companion pamphlet to **Churches in Bristol,** also by Bryan Little, published in the same series. The two together form an admirable short guide to the architecture and contents of Bristol's churches. Mr. Little is, as might be expected, learned, accurate and readable and in forty pages of well-produced text and illustrations deals with seventeen types of church furnishings from the fine medieval brass chandelier now in the Cathedral to William Mitchell's unconventional and slightly controversial Stations of the Cross in Clifton Cathedral. The treatment is necessarily brief, but the result is a well balanced and useful introductory survey of a subject on which there is otherwise little readily accessible information. Mr. Little's text is supplemented by some 24 good photographs and two interesting reproductions from the Braikenridge Collection in the City Art Gallery.

Space is at a premium in a work of this nature, but I would have welcomed a brief glossary of terms (herm, aumbry, sedilia and so on) for the benefit of those coming quite new to the subject.

G. Langley.

FAMOUS BRISTOLIANS AND OTHERS HAVING STRONG ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE CITY

by David Foot, Redcliffe Press, 1979, 75 pence

This booklet of twenty-eight pages (eleven of them devoted to illustrations) should find a useful enough market on the bookstalls of the railway stations of Temple Meads and Paddington. Like station sandwiches it is a 'light bite' suitable for example for the historically-inclined day-tripper be it in mind or body, to or around Bristol. On the outward journey he will have consumed it by the time he passed through Slough or it will last him to Bath on the return journey to London. Either way he has much further to travel both on his journey and in his subsequent reading. If the curate's egg was 'good in parts' this is perhaps the butter on the curate's bread – a superficial covering nutritious enough as far as it goes but thinly spread and not guaranteed to satisfy the demands of any deep hunger.

With due allowance being made for joint biographies, the objective of providing synoptic introductions to the lives and achievements of some fifty men and women whose names can be linked with Bristol has been passably achieved – even without the inclusion of dates of birth and death. The author has a talent for brisk, incisive opening sentences which stimulate a reader's interest and it is for this reason regrettable that no references are provided to at least one fuller standard biography wherever these exist. Within so limited an allotment of space it might also have been better to sacrifice the full-page illustrations in favour of smaller pictures grouped onto one page and so make that arrangement standard throughout the booklet. By that means space might have been found for a list of houses bearing memorial plaques. This could have given the book a more enduring value and could also have permitted the inclusion of some names not allowed a fuller record. Any book of this kind is always vulnerable to criticisms of omissions but it is perhaps not unfair to complain of the exclusion of Sir George White and John Addington Symonds. However, Mr. Foot cannot be fairly expected to have done everything; his personal selection is basically adequate.

Perhaps the author's limited objectives should have been stated in a brief paragraph of preface. Without it the more critical of readers seeking a sufficient introduction to the good and great of Bristol may feel that he or she has been given short measure. However, at the modest selling price asked there is no reason for too clamorous complaint.

C. J. Spittal.

AVON LOCAL HISTORY HANDBOOK
edited by J. S. Moore
(published for the Avon Local History Association
by Phillimore & Co., Chichester, 1979), 188pp. £2.50.

The first reaction of some readers to this **Handbook** may be regret that its promoters have taken as their geographical terms of reference that artificial and unhistorical county of 1974, which others in the local history field, most relevantly the local record offices, have so far managed to ignore. This is not, however, point worth labouring. It happens to have been an association based on Avon and not on the pre-1974 Gloucestershire, Somerset, or Bristol that has had the initiative and energy to produce this useful guide and it would be churlish to pretend that local history in most of its aspects (some branches of administrative history excepted) cannot be studied just as well in the context of the new county as of one of the old ones.

Equivalent publications have generally provided little more than a bibliography of sources; the **Avon Local History Handbook** has gone a stage further by including a series of short articles by a panel of contributors, intended to survey the main topics of local history and describe for each the sources and methods of research. The majority of the articles, including those on agriculture, trade and communications, industry, local administration, and education ably fulfil this intention and provide useful general surveys of the subjects. One or two of the authors, however, have been over anxious to promote the current (and perhaps soon outdated) preoccupations of professional historians and so have concentrated too much on outlining the questions they think the local historian should be trying to resolve, at the expense of plain description of the subject and practical advice on how to study it. Such practical advice, on for example the purpose and layout of the different kinds of documents, will presumably be what most amateur historians require from such a guide, preferring to

frame their own questions and develop their own interests. Sadly, the less successful articles include the one covering that most characteristic of local history topics, the rural and urban landscape, which comes across too much as an analytical science (with the beginnings of its own jargon) and too little as the imaginative appreciation of our surroundings that a Professor Hoskins can make of it.

The bibliography of printed and documentary sources occupies almost half of the book and is excellent value. One of the few possible grounds for criticism is the decision to omit anything on the Public Record Office and its collections where good practical advice might save the freshly-embarked local historian some of the frustration usually involved in a first encounter with that institution.

Altogether, this is a most useful guide for the local historian, and it is to be hoped that the example set by Mr. Moore and his colleagues will be followed by many other local history societies.

N. M. Herbert.

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